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Wilmington lawyer honored for pro bono work

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Wilmington attorney Dana Harrington Conner has won a national award for her work with an organization that offers legal assistance to low-income families.

The 2002 Sandra Day O'Connor Award for Professional Service was presented to Conner in a ceremony at the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington on Oct. 19.

Conner, 37, is the managing attorney of Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, an organization of volunteer attorneys offering help to low-income residents. She also is an adjunct professor at the Widener University School of Law. The award was given to Conner "for her outstanding work in public service, pro bono and community service on behalf of indigent persons," according to the American Inns of Court, which presents the award.

In 2001, Delaware Volunteer Legal Services helped more than 1,000 low-income defendants.

"The entire law school community is proud to be associated with Dana Harrington Conner," said Widener Dean Douglas E. Ray. "Her award is a tribute to her public service."

The national award was created to recognize an attorney in practice for less than 10 years for excellence in public interest or pro bono activities. The award is named for Supreme Court Justice O'Connor.

Conner said she was honored to receive the recognition.

"The award says a lot about the legal profession, that it places such a high honor on pro bono service," she said, adding that it also says a lot about the Delaware Bar, which nominated her.

"I get to receive this award, but there are a lot of people behind it," she said. More than 600 Delaware attorneys have participated in providing the free legal service, she said.

Conner said she hopes news of the award will inspire others to do volunteer work.

The American Inns of Court is a national legal association composed of more than 24,000 federal, state and local judges, lawyers, law professors and law students.

Delaware Supreme Court Justice Randy J. Holland is the group's national president.